776 thunder was an object of worship, the personification of thunder being an arrow-shooting old man. The god of heaven and thunder was probably Taara, like Thor of the Scandinavians, but from this one cannot conclude that the old religion of the Estonians was monotheistic.

769 The Ancient Estonians believed that life would continue after death the same as an earth. For this reason they used to put in the graves food and other useful items. The Estonians had no fear of the dead. They would often go to the burial ground to speak to their dead relatives and to learn their advice. In November there was the so-called "time of the souls," when it was believed that the dead would come to visit their relatives and they would feast together.

775 Presumably under the influence of Christianity, some of the dead, who had been sorcerers,

775 jealous persons or criminals, were thought to become revengeful demons (kodukäija), the term being a translation of the German Heimgänger. [753] These demons were said to be the cause of sickness and other trouble. Nightmares and plagues were believed to be caused by spirits [177] or by the dead, and death appeared under Chris- [761] tian-German influence personified as a man with a scythe, or who was called Liiva Annus 'Sand Annus.'

754 538 According to the prominent Estonian folklorist, Dr. Oskar Loorits, the least original mythological figure in Estonia is the sorcerer or magician (Estonian nõid, Finnish noita), who can be either man or woman. The ancient nõid was a wise man (tark), a kind of priest and mediator between the spirits, the dead, and the living. He gave good advice to those in trouble and healed

776 social classes, kings and castle ladies, farm hands and maidens, even priests and an army. The spirits are divided, too, on the model of a family, into fathers, mothers, sons and [777] daughters. The spirits have preserved only a little of their heathen origin, but show a strong Catholic influence. Several of them have been taken over from Latvian, such as the God's sons, the sun's daughters, the mother of happiness, etc.

[777] The Livonians' beliefs concerning the 775 dead are strongly influenced by the Latvians. Widespread is the conception of death as a special being (nõvõ) which predicts the death of the people by noise. The Livonians believe that the body of the dead stays in the grave until the resurrection, but the soul goes during the knell into heaven or wanders through the world. When the dead is taken to the graveyard, other dead come to meet him riding on the animal which was killed for the burial. They sit sometimes on the coffin, which therefore becomes [764] quite heavy. The dead person accompanies the burial procession back to the house door or even enters the room. For him a towel, an empty plate and a spoon are put on the end of the table which is closest to the door. Some people are believed to be able to see the dead during the burial. The time between Michaelmas and St. Martin's Day is called "souls' time," since the dead are then roaming around. In former times it was customary to feed the dead with porridge, bread, beer and milk every

775 Monday evening during the "souls' time."

The dead live in the other world or among the people. Life after death is believed to be the continuation of the earthly life. On Christmas night or on Saturday nights they have services in the lighted church. If their tranquillity is distrubed, they do everything to have their peace restored again. The sorcerers, unbaptised children and children killed by their mothers, haunt the living. Those who commit suicide, who are murdered or who otherwise die an untimely death, are said to wander around until their hour of death arrives as set by God. From the unnatural dead have been developed the "cold-shoe," the universal phantom of the Livonians, spooks and nightmares.

754 The belief in magic is important in the Livonian pagan religion. The names of the sorcerer (bur'a and skun'shtnika) have been taken over from the Latvians. One can recognize a sorcerer by his constant spitting and by his unmatched socks. The sorcerers can spoil the entire life of their fellowmen by sending them sickness and misery. On the other hand, they can also do wonders: make the thieves sick and cause them to lose their way. The sorcerers have a secret book, called the Seventh Book of Moses, of which one copy is kept in a church wall in Riga. Often the sorcerers have close connections with the devil. The favorite times for their activity are the nights before